



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein
On Alaska National Wildlife Refuge Drilling
March 15, 2005

“The budget resolution that the Senate is considering this week includes a provision that would allow a simple majority to approve opening the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration. Senator Cantwell is offering an amendment that I am cosponsoring, which would strike this provision from the bill.

I do not believe that the ANWR drilling provision should be attached to a budget resolution. This important question of whether to open the refuge to drilling in the refuge, especially when a majority of Americans remain opposed to it, warrants an independent debate on the floor of the United States Senate. The budget is NOT the appropriate forum.

As for the provision itself, supporters claim that pumping oil from ANWR will free us from dependence on oil from the Middle East. This is simply not the case.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that at peak production - about 1 million barrels a day in 2020 or 2025 - the refuge would supply less than 4 percent of the country’s projected daily needs.

While I agree that we are too dependent on foreign oil, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is simply not the answer. We need to start by reducing our oil consumption and producing more energy from renewable sources.

That is why I intend to reintroduce legislation to close the SUV loophole and raise overall CAFE standards. Closing the SUV loophole alone could save up to 1 million barrels of oil a day years sooner than ANWR is projected to produce the same amount. This in turn will help us decrease the amount of oil we use and reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions (the cause of global warming) that we put into the atmosphere.

Additionally, I am very concerned about the potential devastation to the pristine land and native wildlife that could occur for what is actually very little oil. The refuge is the only conservation unit in the U.S. encompassing a complete range of arctic ecosystems and provides critical habitat to millions of migratory birds, caribou, three species of bears (polar, grizzly and black bears), Dall sheep, muskoxen, wolves, arctic and red foxes, and wolverines.

Proponents of drilling paint ANWR’s coastal plain as small and relatively insignificant, though in reality it is the ecological heart of the refuge and the center of wildlife activity. For example, approximately 130,000 porcupine caribou rely on the coastal

plain as a calving area, and each spring millions of migratory birds journey thousands of miles to nest and feed in the coastal plains' wetlands.

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